

Collecting in Malaysia: January and February 1976

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During the first week in August 1972, I had the opportunity and pleasure of not only sampling some of the remarkable lepidoptera which that grand country Malaysia produces, but also of meeting the leading experts, notably Henry Barlow and "Wickie" Fleming (*vide Ent. Rec.* (1973), **85**:205-210, 238-240). At that date they gave me a very cordial invitation to make a return and longer stay since I was then only able to fit in the inside of a week's intensive collecting as I was on my way to the International Congress of Entomology in Canberra. During 1975 Anthony Owston had also migrated to Kuala Lumpur. They gave me a further combined and most pressing invitation to try some collecting at a different time of the year, preferably during the early months when it was likely to be fairly rainy with a greater profusion of insects. Soon after Christmas, 1975 seemed to present the best chance. However, I found it not possible to set out until the end of January 1976, and flew direct to Kuala Lumpur on the 28th of that month, arriving after a few stops en route in the late afternoon of January 29th which was the virtual start of the Chinese New Year celebrations. I was met by Henry Barlow who had arranged for me to stay with him over the holiday weekend at his country seat at Genting, on the Selangor Pahang border some 25 miles to the north-east of the city. I had first been to this most attractive resort soon after he had taken it over in 1972 when it was in disrepair. But in the 3½ years interval he had completely transformed it into a most comfortable and luxurious home which was to be my headquarters on three separate occasions. It is perched on a small eminence at just over 2,000 ft. with a mile-long rough drive leading up from the main road. It produced a biturong the evening my host drove me from the airport. I was greeted by a blazing sun on the morning of the 30th which, as events turned out, was to persist with hardly a break for my whole stay of a month. There had been hardly any rain after a very wet spell just after Christmas. It was very pleasant reacquainting myself with the surrounding country and thick forest over most of the big estate of several hundred acres. It was not long before I spotted that magnificent butterfly *Trogonoptera brookiana albescens* Rothschild sailing round some of the tree tops and settling on yellow flowers. Late that afternoon one was seen hovering over lantana blossom near the house, which has a small valley of luscious herbage leading to the foot of the large waterfall. This was alive with blues mainly as before with both sexes of *Jamides celeno aelianus* Fab., while the chief satyrid was *Ypthima pandocus corticaria* Butler. *Eurema hecabe contubernalis* Moore was the most numerous Grass yellow and *Neptis hylas papaja* Moore seemed to be gliding about in most

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of the glades, but on the whole butterflies were perhaps not in such profusion in this region as they were in 1972, since quite a lot of the forest had been cleared since then. However, there was quite enough on the wing to keep me busy, especially on the 31st when many Danaids were apparent, mainly the yellow winged *Danaus aspasia* Fab. and the very striped *D. vulgaris macrina* Fruhstorfer, together with both sexes of *Euploea mulciber* Cramer. Later that afternoon with my host, we saw a female *brookiana* fluttering quite low down which eluded us. However, he netted a fine *Delias hyparete metarete* Butler. The chief feature of February 1st, another very fine day, was seeing a huge female *Troides amphrisus ruficollis* Butler sail along the drive where several other Danaids appeared, including *Euploea tulliolus ledereri* C. & R. Felder, while a notable local record was a male of the scarce nymphaline *Euripus nyctelius euploeoides* C. & R. Felder which was at rest in the drive. While the male is like a Neptis, the female which I took in 1972 is a mimic of *Euploea diocletianus* Fab.

That evening my host took me and some of his relatives also staying with him, up the fairly newly constructed road to the Genting Highlands Hotels complex situated at some 5,000 ft., about ten miles from his house. As we ascended we saw orchids growing in profusion on many trees, but when we reached the summit we found a dense mass of humanity enjoying the Chinese New Year festivities. After a hurried meal we quickly descended after dark and were rewarded with a remarkable night for moths. Our first halt was at a local police station where we were welcomed to look round. Nearly every wall where there were lights, was smothered in species of all sizes, from some huge Uraniids to some small noctuids and geometers. We had a remarkable harvest there and still more at a lighted archway further down which was also well patronised mainly by members of the Footman genus (Lithosiids), such as the distinctly local species *Chionaema malayensis* Hampson and *C. selangorica* Hampson. Some huge Cossids were also sitting round the lights.

The next two days, February 2nd and 3rd, were spent in the grounds of Genting where *T. brookiana* was seen on several occasions, chiefly before midday. On the latter date a very large Saturniid moth alighted on one of the doors after dark. It turned to be a perfect male example of *Antheraea helferi* Moor, measuring nearly 8 in. in expanse.

The next day, the 4th, I accompanied my host and his relatives into the capital down the winding Gombak valley. Later that morning a taxi drove me the 100 miles along the northern road to Tapah, near Ipoh, and after a halt for lunch the further 40 miles up to nearly 5,000 ft. to the famous Cameron Highlands. This resort consists of a fairly large hotel centre originally cut out of the primary forest and surrounding a large size golf course on which it was possible to meet an occasional roving tiger, as was the case in July 1975. It was a delightful setting, though I arrived on the only wet day of

my stay. However, some people visiting my headquarters at Foster's Hotel kindly drove me up to the Brinchang summit at 6,000 ft. through the extensive tea estates, but unfortunately in a deluge. But it was soon apparent that the lepidoptera were not numerous in this region at this season, possibly due to the ravages of collecting them for sale, though the forest around had not been in any way depleted or destroyed. *Lampides baeticus* L. seemed to be the commonest blue. On February 6th, I penetrated one of the forest trails near a large house called Hopetoun where the chief capture was the brightly coloured *Delias ninus* Wallace. It was on the 8th that I discovered the old road leading south which ascended through a thick tree plantation and was bordered on the north side by unbroken forest which it was not possible to penetrate owing to the local political situation. However, it was the most fruitful area in the vicinity. By parading up and down this road a good many very desirable insects were met with, notably the Riodinid *Abisara neophron chelina* Fruhstorfer. On the next morning there was the delightful little nymphaline *Limenitis daraxa theoda* Fruhstorfer, looking like a small White Admiral. This stretch of road was mostly my daily venue. Another much more notable capture on this beat on the 12th was *Delias belladonna malayana* Pendlebury, which is exceedingly local and normally only found near the summit of Brinchang. Another visit to the Hopetoun locality produced on the 11th *Precis atlites* L. and *Papilio helenus* L. On the morning of the 13th in very fine conditions, I took a taxi to the top of Brinchang at some 6,500 ft. and collected along part of the road near the top where a good many Danaïds were flying. These turned out to be mainly *Danaus similis sinopion* Fruhstorfer and *D. sita ethologica* Swinhoe.

After just over a week's very pleasant, though perhaps none too profitable sojourn in these delightful surroundings, I set out on February 14th once more by taxi for the capital at a cost of the equivalent of just £10 for the 150 miles. I was welcomed again by Henry Barlow, this time in one of the few thunderstorms during my stay, but to his dismay there had been no rain at his estate where it was so badly needed. On the Sunday, the 15th, we had a gathering of entomologists for the day, including "Wickie" and Alix Fleming, Anthony Owston and his wife, and Harry Traill, but not many insects were on the move, though a nice black and white Skipper, *Tagiades ultra* Evans, was taken inside the large living room which measured a length of some 60 ft. The next two days were spent once more surveying the forest area round the Genting estate. Both sexes of *Euthalia iapis ruseda* Moore and of *E. monina* Fab. were seen with their respective remarkable dimorphism, but nothing of especial note was seen on this my second visit to this locality. On the 18th my host drove me into the city for a few days visit to Anthony Owston in his fine house on the outskirts just bordering the golf course, but the thermometer on his verandah that afternoon registered

94°F. in the shade. *Appias lyncidas vasava* Fruhstorfer was the main pierid on the wing in his garden. However, the following day "Wickie" Fleming called for me and we drove to the Ampang Reservoir a few miles outside the city. This well-known and productive locality is surrounded by thick forest where not long before some other collectors saw a black panther cross the path where they were having lunch. After skirting the small reservoir we made our way along a very shaded forest path overshadowed by thick vegetation. One of our earliest captures was the magnificent Amathusiid *Amathuxidia amathaon dilucida* Honrath. This male example had quite a noticeably pleasant scent. One of the larger tailless Papilios which found its way into our net was the female of *Atrophaneura nox erebus* Wallace with the smaller *Papilio demoleon* Cramer. Another interesting inhabitant was the spectacular Satyrid *Neorina loewii neophyta* Fruhstorfer, with its peculiar white patch on the hindwings. One of the largest of the Oak Blues, *Arhopala centaurus* Fab., was another capture together with the huge Skipper *Gangara thyraxis* Fab. Several species of Jamides were present, including *J. coeruleus* Druce. The following day, February 20th, my host took me to the famous locality of Ulu Langat which I had sampled to good advantage in 1972, but this time we went further up the valley on a rough track. A good many patches of prawns were placed at intervals along the pathway. These were well patronised in due course, as were some damp patches from which a cloud of butterflies arose, mostly Pierids. The most spectacular was the orange *Appias nero figulina* Butler, with some *A. indra plana* Butler. Our bait attracted no less than six of the grand white *Poliura delphis concha* Vollenhoeven, with a good many *Polyura athamas samatha* Moore as well *P. hebe chersoneus* Fruhstorfer and *Charaxes bernardus cepax* Fruhstorfer. Some of the Sword-tails (*Graphium*) were about in numbers, including *G. agetes iponus* Fruhstorfer and *G. antiphates itamputi* Butler, also the tailless *G. delertessii* Guérin-Ménéville and the scarce *G. ramaceus pendleburyi* Corbet. The handsome Danaid *Euploea diocletianus* flew lazily around our car. There was also quite a host of small Lycaenids and a grand *Troides helena cerberus* C. & R. Felder sailed over us as we were leaving.

The next morning, the 21st, I accompanied the Owstons back to the Genting estate for my third stay with Henry Barlow. On the way we halted at a very inviting spot about 20 miles up the Gombak Valley where quite a lot was flying, including the huge *Papilio memnon agenor* L., also the almost equally large female of *P. nephelus annulus* Pendlebury. The female of *Euthalia iapis puseda* Moore was also in evidence with several smaller Arhopalas and Skippers flitting along a small waterfall. Over the weekend at the Genting estate, I again saw several *T. brookiana*, all flying high, as well as some of the Danaids already mentioned and the female of *Euthalia monina* Fab. taken in the house of my host Henry

Barlow. On the evening of February 24th he drove me to a party in Kuala Lumpur attended by the Flemings. They took me back to their home at Bukit Rotan, some 30 miles to the north-east of the city. I had paid a brief visit there in 1972 and was not to be disappointed this time, since not only was there a good assortment in the garden and at their bait trap, but we revisited some of the best localities in the district. On the 25th, we went over to the Bukit Tarek reserve which had proved so fruitful on my previous trip, and was no less so on this occasion when we strewed the roadway with dumps of prawns which proved very attractive to the Pierids and Papilios. *G. antiphates* was well to the fore with a few *Appias nero* and many *Saletara liberia distanti* Butler, while *Graphium bathycles bathycloides* Honrath and *G. agamemnon* L. were frequent visitors to the bait. Several tailed Lycaenids were seen, including *Eooxylides tharis distanti* Riley, *Zeltus amassa maximinianus* Fruhstorfer and the scarce *Ancema blanka* Nicéville with its silver underside. *Polyura hebe* and *P. delphis* also appeared here.

The next two days we visited forest reserves, the first on the 26th called Sungei Buloh which was not too productive, though there were a good many *Neptis*, *Euremas* and also *Euthalia iapis*. However, the one reserve on the 27th known as Rantan Panjang provided many more insects along its forest paths where once more the prawns proved very attractive to most of the *Graphium* species enumerated earlier. Several fine Nymphalines were also present, including the splendid *Parthenos sylvia lilacinus* Butler and several *Cirrochroa emalea* Guérin-Ménéville which liked to alight on one's hand, while *Athyma pravara helma* Fruhstorfer and *A. asura idita* Moore were also sailing round the thick foliage, and the large Danaid *Euploea camaralzeman paraclaudina* Pendelbury. Back at Bukit Rotan the chief visitors to the traps were the huge *Amathusia phidippus* L. and the unusual Satyrid *Elymnias hypermnestra beatrice* Fruhstorfer with its dentated wings and blue spotting, mainly the females. Our final day on February 28th we spent at Kuala Selangor which is virtually on the Strait of Malacca, but our only capture was a small form of *Danaus chrysippus* L. Later that evening my hosts drove me to the airport at Kuala Lumpur, which I left at midnight and with a stop at Bahrain reached Heathrow the morning of February 29th. So ended a most delightful and rewarding month in the Malay Peninsula, made all the more enjoyable thanks to the kindness of many friends and in particular Henry Barlow, the Flemings and Anthony Owston and his wife, who acted as my hosts, and not least too to Datu Harry Traill who showed us the fine number of local moths he had been accumulating over several years. On my return a great many of these were identified by Mr. W. H. Tams, also by Mr. Alan Hayes and Mrs. Maureen Lane, all of the British Museum (Natural History), and I am very indebted to them for their valuable assistance. The identification of the

butterflies was greatly simplified since the publication in 1975 of Mr. Wickham Fleming's very fine two volumes on "The Butterflies of West Malaysia and Singapore", both admirably illustrating in colour most of the thousand species already recorded in that large region. But I have thought it advisable on this occasion not to add a complete list of the some 200 species of lepidoptera we saw, owing to the large amount of additional print space it would occupy. In the text I have enumerated the principal species. In all, we noted 17 Papilionidae, 14 Pieridae, 10 Danaidae, 7 Satyridae, 3 Amathusiidae, 23 Nymphalidae, 2 Riodinidae, at least 40 Lycaenidae, and some 25 Hesperidae.

THE GRIZZLED SKIPPER (*Pyrgus malvae* L.) ON THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY, KENT. — I am pleased to be able to report that for the last three years I have found specimens of *Pyrgus malvae* Linn. at Minster, on the Isle of Sheppey (OS: 51/94-73-). I note from Mr. Chalmers-Hunt's *Butterflies and Moths of Kent*, Vol. 1 that he found only one record of this butterfly for the island and that he considered it doubtful that it was still present. Similarly, *The Provisional Distribution Maps*, issued by the Biological Records Centre in 1975, show no records in this area at all.

As I have taken it consistently, it would appear to be fairly well established, on rough open ground about 250 yards from the sea. I have taken only small numbers each year, but over an area almost half a mile in depth, between April and early June. Because of its scarcity, I have released all except one of my captures—having kept the first, which was in fact taken by my then eight-year-old daughter, who came home one day and described seeing it sitting on some tall grass. She gave quite an accurate description, and I did not believe her. So she went back and caught it!

I have no knowledge of it elsewhere on the island, although one would think its likely range would extend eastwards along the cliffs. I certainly hope this is the case, as building development is encroaching apace. — GEOFFREY N. BURTON, "Mar-y-Mar", Minster Drive, Minster-in-Sheppey, Kent, ME12 2NG.

HYLES LINEATA LIVORNICA ESPER (STRIPED HAWK-MOTH) AND ABRAXAS SYLVATA SCOPOLI (CLOUDED MAGPIE) ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT. — On the night of 27th June, 1976, which was particularly mild, at about 11 p.m. a male specimen of *H.l. livornica* was seen flying around my m.v. trap. I duly netted it to find that one antenna was missing and one forewing was slightly damaged. On the same night I took a fresh specimen of *A. sylvata*. — PETER J. CRAMP, Stone Cross Cottage, Godshill, I.o.W.